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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/623,179	07/18/2003	Christopher Lee Berg	M81.12-0060	2674

7590 06/14/2005

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EXAMINER

RAMANA, ANURADHA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3732

DATE MAILED: 06/14/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/623,179

Applicant(s)

BERG ET AL.

Examiner

Anu Ramana

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 April 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 9-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 July 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statement filed on November 17, 2003, fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2), which requires a legible copy of each U.S. and foreign patent; each publication or that portion which caused it to be listed; and all other information or that portion which caused it to be listed. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to under "Other Art" therein has not been considered.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference element mentioned in the description: "73." Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement-drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 13, 14 and 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because they are drawn to non-statutory subject matter. In claim 13 (line 3), claim 14 (line 2) and claim

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19 (line 7), applicant positively recites part of a human, i.e. "the knee joint" and "the knee." Thus the claims include a human within their scope and are non-statutory.

A claim directed to or including within its scope a human is not considered to be patentable subject matter under 35 U.S.C. 101. The grant of a limited, but exclusive property right in a human being is prohibited by the Constitution. In re Wakefield, 422 F.2d 897, 164 USPQ 636 (CCPA 1970).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 17-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Whitt (4,373,709).

Whitt discloses a surgical limb holder that can be used to hold a limb in any position, the holder mounted to a surgical table having a support 11, arms 29 and a flexible strap 42 to restrain a lower portion of a leg or "lower leg" (col. 1, lines 19-21).

The method steps of claims 17 and 18 are inherently performed during use of the Whitt limb holder to restrain a limb during surgery.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 9-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fowler, Jr. (US 6,190,312) in view of Fowler (US 5,964,698) and Greishaber (US 4,813,401).

Fowler, Jr. discloses a conventional or variable geometry retractor frame with arms 12a and 12b and a retractor stay apparatus attached to an elastic member wherein the elastic member is received in notch of a member attached to the frame (Fig. 1, cols. 4 and 5 and col. 8, lines 11-28).

Fowler, Jr. discloses all elements of the claimed invention except for the frame being attached to the rail of a surgical table and retractor stay apparatus such as a blade.

Retractor stay members such as paddles or "blades" and hooks attached to elastic members are well known as illustrated by Fowler (Fig. 6 and col. 1, lines 44-52).

Greishaber teaches supporting a retractor frame by mounting it to a rail 8 of a surgical table (Fig. 1, cols. 5 and 6).

Accordingly it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have provided stay members such as blades in the Fowler, Jr. apparatus since such stay members are well known in the art for retracting tissue. Further, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have mounted the retractor apparatus of the combination of Fowler and Fowler, Jr. to an operating table, as taught by Greishaber as it is common knowledge in the retracting art to support a conventional retractor frame by mounting it to a surgical table.

Alternatively, claims 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whitt (US 4,373,709).

Whitt discloses that the limb holder 10 can be utilized in any position, which will enhance and facilitate surgery.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have utilized the limb holder 10 to restrain the lower leg or "tibia" to provide support without discomfort.

The method steps of claims 17 and 18 are rendered obvious by the above discussion.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments submitted under "REMARKS" in the response filed on April 4, 2005 with respect to claims 9 and 19 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. Although Applicant stated that a corrected drawing was submitted no drawing was found in the response submitted on April 4, 2005.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-8 allowed.

The indicated allowability of claims 17-18 and 20-21 is withdrawn in view of the rejections made in this office action.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anu Ramana whose telephone number is (571) 272-4718. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kevin Shaver can be reached at (571) 272-4720. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

AR *Amudha Ramana*
June 12, 2005

Kevin Shaver
KEVIN SHAVER
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700